

I bet he has it and he won't admit it -- yeah,
look at that tightness of repressed pain around his lips."

Listen, old buddies, I want to join your company of
misery.

For instance, I have sex exclusively in those positions
the doctor book says are most apt to be harmful.
I feel as if I've been left out of one more fraternity.
Look at me -- the rest of my body is a shambles --
I've destroyed it trying to get at that nasty little
gland.

Give me some slack, guys:
I've always been a little slow.
It was only in fourth grade
that I learned to tie my own shoes.

TRANSCENDENT LOGIC

after the film, my little boy,
who now must cope with a divorce
as well as the even more terrifying realization
that he will never catch up in age with his sister,
grows strangely quiet.

"what's the matter, big guy?" i ask.

"nothing," he says.

"come on," i urge, "something's wrong."

"if something's wrong," he says,
"please tell me what it is."

at a loss for words,
i once again fail him.

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE POET

he was not born to the word
nor was he much of a learner,

but being ugly
not quite good enough to go far in sports
and a total bust in school

and having read at an early age a biography of dylan
thomas,

he decided it would be sexy as hell to be a poet.

as other men do a hundred pushups,
he wrote a hundred poems a day.
he submitted them to magazines
in batches of two hundred.
at first his attempts to become published
met with disappointment.
but after he founded his own mimeo press,
which specialized in the publication of other editors,
that all changed overnight.
he also wrote essays which redefined poetry
as precisely the sort of stuff he wrote himself.
he wanted to give the school of verse he had launched
(although the terms "school" and "verse" were customarily
anathema to him)
a name, but most of the good names were taken.
he settled for "prong poetry."

soon he had published hundreds of thousands of poems
in tens of thousands of chapbooks.
practice only makes perfect
if it has something promising to start with,
but he did improve a little.
it was no longer possible
not to take him seriously.
he had become a poet by attrition.
he disposed of his scattered critics
with ad hominem volleys: they were fairies
or stuff shirts or jealous or profs.
young poets who were bad to begin with
became even worse in imitation of him.
he became the token entry from the avant-garde
in trade anthologies.

he figured prominently in contemporary literary histories.

now all he had to fear was the judgement
of readers he would be too dead to manhandle.

ATRIUM-SCHMATRIUM

my girlfriend tells me that colette
said too great a concentration of human beings
makes plants suffocate.

i find the converse to be likewise true.